

Staff's interpretation of Planning Commission key decision points as of 2/22/12 (based on straw votes, general discussion, and Corridor Planning Principles)

Plan Goal: Create a livable, desirable and economically vital environment defined by thoughtful urban design, multi-modal transportation, and vibrant public spaces.

Development Policies

- The Plan will guide redevelopment and land use in the Rockville Pike corridor.
- No property is required to redevelop until and unless the owner chooses to do so.
- Development must be supported by a commensurate growth of infrastructure.
- Building heights are measured in stories rather than in feet to encourage variety in building heights, even within frontages.
- Maximum story heights are imposed to ensure that building heights will not be excessive, (but there should be options to present alternatives to this and other development standards to the Approving Authority for consideration).
- Maximum building heights should vary depending on their location within the corridor
 - The tallest building heights should be closest to the Twinbrook Metro station.
 - Lower heights are desired adjacent to existing lower density residential uses.
 - A layback slope should be applied where building heights might otherwise have a negative impact on adjacent existing residential uses.
- To encourage a mixed-use urban environment closest to the Twinbrook Metro Station, building heights should be a minimum of three stories, whereas the minimum building height is one or two stories in other parts of the corridor.
- The public realm created by infrastructure, street-fronting building facades, and open spaces should be welcoming and support many types of pedestrian activity.
- To enhance the pedestrian environment, the majority of a building's facade should be located adjacent to sidewalks on the most pedestrian-oriented streets. Flexibility should be allowed, however, particularly in areas away from the Pike and the Twinbrook Metro station that may be less densely developed.
- Allow for flexibility in development standards:
 - No requirements for side and rear setbacks
 - No requirements for minimum retail depth
 - No requirements for upper story ceiling height minimums
 - Require demarcation where the building façade is not at the sidewalk but permit flexibility regarding what is used as demarcation (not limited to a wall).
- Permit flexibility by allowing for appropriate deviations from development standards if approved by the Approving Authority.
- There is no desire to impose any particular architectural style or highly specific architectural requirements within the corridor.

Parking

- There should be a minimum setback for surface and structured parking for street-facing facades only.
- Parking minimums and maximums for non-residential uses are established that vary throughout the corridor, depending on frontage location. Maximum parking requirements are based on the requirements of Section 25.16.03.f. of the existing zoning ordinance.

- The greatest parking reductions for non-residential uses (up to 75%) are allowed closest to the Twinbrook Metro Station and 50% to 60% reductions are allowed elsewhere in the plan area. These reductions reflect the minimum amount of parking required.
- Parking minimums and maximums are also established for attached and multifamily residential uses and range between 0.5 and 1.5 spaces per unit, depending on number of bedrooms.

Distinct Character of South, Middle and North

- The character of the corridor is not, and should not be, the same for the entire 2.2 miles.
- There is a desire to allow the existing character of the Middle and North Pike to continue, in part by allowing single story buildings in the North Pike and on the east side of the Middle Pike.

Desired Uses

- Most non-industrial land uses should be accommodated within the corridor (pursuant to the applicable zoning regulations).
- Mixed uses within the corridor are desirable, but no single building is required to contain a mix of uses.
- Large format retailers as well as small and locally owned businesses are allowed and encouraged.
- Retail uses should only be prohibited in areas identified as predominantly residential or adjacent to existing residential uses.
- Ground floor ceiling heights in most areas of the Pike will allow for retail uses even if the initial tenant is not a retailer.

Parks and Open Space

- There is acknowledgement that parks and open space are sorely lacking in the corridor and are desirable due to the population growth that is anticipated for the corridor.
- The City should have a goal of acquiring at least 10 acres of dedicated parkland in the corridor, distributed between the North, middle and South Pike, so that all residences are within a ten-minute walk of a park.
- Parcels that are at least 3 acres in size should be required to dedicate land for parks. The minimum size for a dedicated park should be 3/10 acre.
- Parcels that are smaller than 3 acres should provide their open space requirement through fee-in-lieu.
- One or two extra stories should be allowed, depending on frontage, for providing additional land or fee-in-lieu for parks.

Rockville Pike: The Multi-Way Boulevard

- The infrastructure plan for Rockville Pike should include the option to accommodate BRT, should BRT “happen”.
- Access roads, which currently exist informally for much of the length of the Pike within the plan area, should be formally established to separate local traffic from through traffic and reduce the number of curb cuts from the through lanes.

- Transit should operate within the main travel lanes, either dedicated in the center or on the outside main lanes.
- Bicycles should be separated from faster-moving through traffic by having a dedicated two-way bike path in the access roads on both sides of the Pike.
- Wide sidewalks, separated from through traffic, will improve safety and enhance the overall pedestrian experience on the Pike (sidewalks scheduled for upcoming PC discussion).
- On-street parking on the access roads will provide some “teaser” short-term parking for adjacent land uses on the Pike, will help keep travel speeds slow in the vehicular access lane, and will provide an additional buffer for pedestrians.

Other Transportation Infrastructure

- The use of public transit should be optimized by improving access and its desirability as an option, but automobile use will always need to be accommodated.
- Improving the safety and overall experience of the pedestrian and bicyclist is important to consider in the design of all streets in the corridor, in addition to the Pike.
- Added street network and reduced block sizes will help to increase walkability, as well as increased connectivity and movement choices for all travel modes.
- There is a desire for an expanded street grid in the Middle Pike (beyond what is shown in the draft plan), in addition to the extension of Jefferson Street, in conjunction with redevelopment.
- Street alignments and frontages must be respectful and protective of existing residential uses.
- Blocks should be no larger than 4 acres and block faces should be no more than 500 feet in length. Attractive pedestrian cut-throughs and alleys are encouraged for blocks that are close to these maximum dimensions.
- The Plan should allow for some flexibility for practical locations and alignments of new streets.

Undecided Plan Topics

- Open space recommendations (scheduled for Planning Commission on March 28)
- Sidewalks, streetscapes, street trees (scheduled for Planning Commission on April 11)
- Approaches to congestion management (tentative for PC discussion April 25)
- Fleet Street extension (tentative for PC discussion April 25)
- Jefferson Street extension design (tentative for PC discussion April 25)
- Other incentives for additional building stories (in addition to parks - not scheduled)
- Implementation (tentative for PC discussion May 9)

Code Topics

- Administration (tentative for PC discussion May 9)